



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
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Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

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TROUT HEADING TO SUMMERSET JAN. 11

INDIANOLA – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will stock about 1,600 rainbow trout at Summerset State Park around noon, on Jan. 11. The trout will be stocked in the South Lake, as long as the weather and ice conditions are suitable.

“The trout at Summerset provide a unique opportunity for central Iowan’s that is close to home,” said Ben Dodd, area fisheries biologist for the DNR. “It is usually fairly fast-action fishing, which makes it a great place to bring kids.”

Summerset State Park is the only trout fishery in central Iowa. The trout are raised at the Big Spring hatchery near Elkader. Anglers who want to fish for the trout are required to purchase a trout stamp (\$11) in addition to an Iowa fishing license. The daily bag limit for trout is five and the possession limit is 10.

For more information, contact Dodd at 515-432-2823.

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VOLUNTEERS OFFERED NEW YEARS OPPORTUNITIES

DES MOINES — Nothing says ‘New Year’s Resolution’ like the promise to give back to Iowa’s natural resources. Because of new opportunities from Keepers of the Land, the volunteer program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), anyone can try something new and lend a helping hand in the process.

- **Invasive Species Eradication:** Officials at Mines of Spain State Recreation area are looking for volunteers to help with eliminating some local invasive species. Hours are flexible and this opportunity is ongoing. For more information, contact Wayne Buchholtz at (563) 556-0620.
- **Trail Maintenance Opportunity:** Officials at Union Grove State Park are in need of volunteers to assist with park trail maintenance. Start time is immediate and weekday hours are preferred but flexible. Opportunity is ongoing. For more information, contact Frank Rickerl at (641) 473-2556.
- **Construction Opportunity:** Officials at Lake Manawa State Park are in need of volunteers to assist with construction tasks in the picnic and kiosk areas. This opportunity starts immediately and is ongoing with one-day flexible hours. For more information, contact John Maehl at (712) 366-0220.
- **Nesting Box Maintenance Opportunity:** Officials at Big Creek State Park are in need of volunteers to assist with duck box and bluebird house maintenance. Start time is immediate and hours of service are flexible. For more information, contact Kim Olofson at (515) 984-6473.
- **Law Enforcement Opportunity:** Officials at the Banner Shooting Range are looking for range attendant volunteers. Preferred hours of service are Fridays – Tuesdays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. This opportunity starts immediately and goes until April 1, 2007. For more information, contact Rod Slings at (515) 281-8652 or Megan Wisecup at (515) 281-7828.

Please visit the Keepers of the Land website at www.keepersoftheland.org for information on these and more volunteer opportunities. For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us.

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WOODLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

CRESTON - A traditional woodland improvement practice, crop tree release thinning, is an important tool for improving wildlife habitat in woodlands. "Crowded oaks, periodically 'released' from other tree competition, can improve acorn production as much as seven-fold, and can double oak crop tree diameter growth rates within one thinning cycle," said Randy Goerndt, district forester for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Creston.

More than 30 wildlife species utilize acorns, but they are especially important as a fall and winter food supply for deer, turkeys, and squirrels. Managing an Iowa oak-hickory woodland to improve habitat for these species is all about improving long-term acorn production.

“Generally, there is a relationship between oak tree diameter size and acorn production,” Goerndt said. “Northern red oaks usually maximize acorn production when they are 20 inches in diameter. White oaks do the same when they are about 26 inches in diameter. Black oaks keep increasing acorn production throughout the life of the tree. Managing a woodland to grow large diameter oaks as quickly as possible, and retain them in the woodland as long as possible, is the goal of crop tree release thinning.”

Woodlands that attract and hold the greatest number of deer, turkeys and squirrels are producing in excess of 100 pounds of acorns per acre per year. To do this, the woodland must have a minimum of 22-to-25 good acorn producers per acre, that are dominant (tallest trees in the woodland) in crown position, and have tops that compose one-third of their total tree height. Unfortunately, many of our upland oak-hickory woodlands are comprised of pole-sized (6-to-10 inches diameter) oaks in stands that are too crowded with trees to reach desirable acorn production levels within 100 years if left untreated. Selective thinning is the answer.

Crop tree release thinning is a simplified selective thinning method by which a pre-determined number of oak crop trees (trees to leave for acorn production) are selected and “released” from other tree competition. “It is nothing more than visually selecting ‘leave trees’ and removing or killing a minimal number of adjacent trees to give the ‘leave trees’ more room and sunlight necessary for the improved crown expansion needed to produce more acorns,” Goerndt said. “Generally, 15-to-30 oak crop trees per acre are chosen to be released and it may take removing or killing one to four adjacent trees to properly release the crowns of each selected crop tree. Once the woodland is treated, it usually takes 10-to-15 years before crowns begin to touch again and for further thinning needs to be determined.”

The Iowa DNR has district foresters who offer technical advice for crop tree release thinning needs. A forester can teach you how to select, mark, and release crop trees, mark the crop trees for you, or help direct you to a consulting forester who you can contract with to do the work. If you qualify for state or federal program cost-share assistance, crop tree release thinning can be very cost-effective. With programs that offer 60-to-75 percent cost-share assistance, a landowner’s out of pocket expense may run from \$25 to \$60 per acre to get the work done.

“Unlike other woodland management practices, thinning for wildlife habitat improvement can often show marked improvement in attracting and holding wildlife within one to two years following treatment,” Goerndt said. “Examples may be increased observations of wildlife using brush piles, or just seeing more deer and turkeys hanging around the under-story of a newly thinned woodland. These quick, observable responses to management often provide the motivation to do more management and to have more fun doing it.”

For more information, contact your DNR district forester. A listing of DNR foresters is available at www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/index.html.

TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT AVAILABLE THIS SPRING

AMES – Habitat created by trees and shrubs is critical to wildlife survival in Iowa. Though one tree gives some benefits, a diverse planting of trees and shrubs give the greatest benefit to the most wildlife.

In response to the call to expand wildlife habitat plantings, the State Forest Nursery, at Ames, is offering low cost Wildlife and Songbird packets of conservation trees and shrubs for citizens to plant this spring.

The Songbird Packet is ideal for an area in the yard to devote to wildlife. The Songbird Packet consists of two bur oaks, two white pine, four wild plum, four chokecherry, four gray dogwoods and four serviceberry plants. The bareroot seedlings are 8-to-24 inches tall. This Songbird Packet sells for \$20 and was developed in cooperation with Audubon Iowa.

The Create-Your-Own Wildlife Packet is for the landowner with 1-to-5 acres. This packet contains 200 trees and or shrubs of your choice for \$90. Trees and shrubs must be ordered in units of 50 plants.

In addition, a special Turkey Packet developed in cooperation with the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation contains 50 bur oak, 50 red oak, 50 pin oak and 50 gray dogwood. A special Pheasant Packet developed in cooperation with Iowa Pheasants Forever contains 50 redcedar, 50 wild plum, 50 ninebark and 50 gray dogwood. Finally, a special Quail Packet containing 100 wild plum and 100 gray dogwoods is also available.

To order, contact the State Forest Nursery at 1-800-865-2477 or go on line to www.iowadnr.com/forestry/. The packets will be delivered from the middle of April through May with instructions and ready for planting.

For more information, contact John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa DNR forestry bureau at 515-242-5966 or john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us.

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VIDEOS ADDED TO DNR WEBSITE

DES MOINES - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has added videos of the 2004 and 2005 annual river clean up called Project AWARE (A Watershed Awareness River Expedition), the Hales Bridge move and winter eagle viewing website, www.iowadnr.gov.

The videos require Windows Media Player for viewing. There is a link to download the player for free, if needed. Click on "DNR Online Videos" under the "Additional Information" heading in the navigation column on the left side of the webpage. Then select either the broadband or dial up connection.

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